

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 AID-05 EB-08 OMB-01 TRSE-00 HA-05
/108 W

-----098651 300307Z /64

R 291703Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4053
INFO AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS
AMEMBASSY VICTORIA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
CINCPAC
AMEMBASSY DAKAR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 20722

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CN, FR, PDIP, PDEV, EAID
SUBJ: DEVELOPMENTS IN THE COMOROS

REF: PARIS 19853

1. WE DISCUSSED THE CURRENT SITUATION IN THE COMOROS
WITH THE QUAI OFFICIAL RESPONSIBLE FOR INDIAN OCEAN
AFFAIRS IN THE AFRICAN DIRECTORATE (PAGNIER) ON
JUNE 28. PAGNIER SAID THAT THE GOF STILL SUFFERS FROM
A DEARTH OF INFORMATION ON ACTUAL EVENTS ON THE
ISLANDS DUE TO LACK OF REPRESENTATION THERE AND POOR
COMMUNICATIONS. THE GOF UNDERSTANDS THAT THE INTERNAL
SITUATION IS CURRENTLY STABLE BUT DOES NOT FEEL THAT
THE FACT OF THE OVERTHROW OF THE UNPOPULAR ALI SOILIH
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WILL ALONE GUARANTEE STABILITY FOR LONG. THE CURRENT
CO-PRESIDENTS OF THE TRANSITIONAL REGIME (WHO ARE
STILL IN FRANCE) ARE NOT THAT BELOVED OF THEIR PEOPLE.
MOHAMMED ABDULLAH IN FACT HAD MANAGED TO MAKE HIMSELF
QUITE UNPOPULAR WITH THE PEOPLE OF THE ISLAND OF
ANJOUAN DURING THE BRIEF PERIOD HE WAS HEAD OF
GOVERNMENT AFTER THE UNILATERAL DECLARATION OF INDE-

PENDENCE. PAGNIER SAID IT WAS EVEN PROBABLY TOO SOON TO EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY OF A COUNTERCOUP, THOUGH THE FACT THAT THE CO-PRESIDENTS HAVE SEEN FIT TO ABSENT THEMSELVES FROM THE COUNTRY FOR THREE WEEKS SO SOON AFTER THE COUP DEMONSTRATES A CERTAIN CONFIDENCE ON THEIR PART.

2. CO-PRESIDENTS MOHAMMED ABDULLAH AND ABDULLAH AHMED CAME TO FRANCE SUDDENLY ON JUNE 13 AND WILL NOT LEAVE BEFORE THE END OF THE MONTH AT THE EARLIEST. THEIR VISIT WAS NOT AT THE INVITATION OF THE GOF WHICH ONLY LEARNED OF THEIR IMPENDING ARRIVAL AT ABOUT THE TIME THEY WERE BOARDING A PARIS-BOUND PLANE IN MADAGASCAR. SINCE ARRIVING THEY HAVE MET WITH A NUMBER OF FRENCH OFFICIALS INCLUDING TWO OF HIGH RANK: MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, OLIVIER STIRN (WHO HAS AN AFRICAN BRIEF) AND MINISTER OF COOPERATION, ROBERT GALLEY. THE COMORANS' GOALS ARE A NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH FRANCE AND OBTAINING ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE. THE GOF INTENDS TO RESPOND POSITIVELY BUT WILL DO SO IN A VERY CAUTIOUS FASHION BECAUSE OF UNCERTAINTY ABOUT THE TRUE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION ON THE ISLAND (AND WE SUSPECT ALSO FROM A CERTAIN MISTRUST OF MOHAMMED ABDULLAH WHOSE UNILATERAL DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE HAS MADE THE COMOROS AN INTERNATIONAL HEADACHE FOR CONFIDENTIAL

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FRANCE ALL OUT OF PROPORTION TO THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ISLANDS.)

3. PAGNIER SAID THAT WITHIN A FEW DAYS THERE WOULD

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PROBABLY BE AN ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS AND THE INTENT TO ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS (SENEGAL IS CURRENTLY FRANCE'S PROTECTING POWER). ESTABLISHMENT OF A DIPLOMATIC MISSION AND THE ASSIGNMENT OF AN AMBASSADOR TO MORONI WOULD TAKE SOME TIME. IN THE MEANTIME, THE GOF WILL SEND A MISSION TO LOOK OVER THE ECONOMIC SITUATION AND DETERMINE THE COMOROS MOST URGENT NEEDS ON THE GROUND. SOME FOOD ASSISTANCE COULD FLOW FAIRLY QUICKLY IF WARRANTED. MORE SUBSTANTIAL AID WILL AWAIT THE SIGNING OF A COOPERATION AGREEMENT. SUCH AN AGREEMENT IS NOT BEING ELABORATED DURING THE CURRENT VISIT.

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4. THE CO-PRESIDENTS HAVE DISCUSSED THE FORM OF THE NEW COMORAN GOVERNMENT WITH THE FRENCH BUT THE GOF IS NOT PROVIDING CONSTITUTIONAL ADVISORS TO ASSIST. THE GOF IS, HOWEVER, MAKING AVAILABLE THE STUDIES DONE PRIOR TO INDEPENDENCE WHEN THE RESULTS OF THE REFERENDUM HAD MADE IT APPARENT THAT A FEDERAL FORM OF GOVERNMENT WOULD BE REQUIRED TO MEET THE WISHES OF THE PEOPLE.

5. THE CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT IN THE COMOROS HAS NOT REMOVED FRANCE'S PROBLEMS OVER THE ISLANDS IN ITS RELATIONS WITH OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES. THE FACT THAT A FRENCH MERCENARY (WITH WHOM THE GOF DENIES ANY CONNECTION) SEEMS TO HAVE MASTERMINDED AND EXECUTED THE COUP WILL OVER THE SHORT TERM INCREASE FRANCE'S

EXPOSURE TO AFRICAN CRITICISM. AND THE FACT THAT
THE CO-PRESIDENTS SEEM PREPARED TO PUT THE QUESTION
OF MAYOTTE OFF TO A LATER TIME WILL NOT PREVENT
AFRICAN CRITICS OF FRANCE'S POLICY SUCH AS TANZANIA
AND ALGERIA FROM SEEKING TO CAPITALIZE ON THE ISSUE
AT THE OAU SUMMIT.
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